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Before I came to AMBS as a student in the late 1980s, I had never heard of “spiritual direction.” During my last year of seminary, I had some faith-related issues I wanted to reflect on more deeply, and I decided to give spiritual direction a try. The experience of intentionally reflecting on how God was at work in my life was very helpful. When I began ministry a few months later, I made a commitment to have either a spiritual friend or a spiritual director walking alongside me and helping me address the spiritual issues I would face. I believe this practice has helped to sustain my ministry.

I wonder how many other alumni were first introduced to spiritual direction while at AMBS. And I wonder how many people came to AMBS because of work with a spiritual director. In this issue of the alumni newsletter, we hear from several alumni engaged in the sometimes life-changing ministry of spiritual direction.

— Janeen Bertsche Johnson,
Alumni Director

AMBS alumni news

SPIRITUAL DIRECTION

A LIFE-GIVING MINISTRY

Rebeka Moeljono

I have found that spiritual direction has become my safe space where I can express my thoughts and share my deepest quest as I respond to God’s call.

I was first introduced to spiritual direction when I was at the seminary. My experience as a directee has encouraged me to learn more about spiritual direction and to become a spiritual director.

It is a life-giving ministry. During the spiritual companionship sessions, I experienced a synergy that opens up, ‘the presence’ that strengthens both the director and the directee. When I shared as a directee or when I listened to my directee, my heart was often flooded with the light of warm feeling. As the light of the candle was felt, the warmth of the presence of God was also kindled.

This ministry has been fulfilling. As a musician and a graphic designer, I desire to help people to pray in creative ways to nurture their spiritual life. I have been

using art, music, dance, colors and writing as a means in spiritual direction to help people to pay attention to the colorful breath of God in us that creates the power of transformation when it is enacted by God’s Spirit.

Through my experiences, I see that spiritual direction is very missional. It’s an accountable place where people are discovering God’s call in their lives and discerning their life transitions or their next step of ministry. It is one of the spiritual formation places where people are tuned in to the heartbeats of God’s love that fuels God’s missions that they carry in their lives.

Rebeka Moeljono (MACF 2008) lives in Azusa, Calif.

Deron Brill Bergstresser

I was an AMBS student when I met with a spiritual director for the first time. Like many seminary students, I was learning
(continued on next page)

WILMA BAILEY RECOGNIZED



Wilma Bailey (MDiv 1979) received a certificate for the Alumni Ministry and Service Recognition from Sara Wenger Shenk on Oct. 16. Listen to her reflections on her teaching ministry from a link on www.ambs.edu/news-events/iTunesU.cfm

A life-giving ministry (continued)

to describe the landscape of my spiritual life—sturdy forests of ancient faith, jagged cliffs of doubt over oceans of mercy. I found myself circling around deserted places, parched throats and unripe fruit. At one point, after listening and praying, my new spiritual director asked: “I wonder if you are trying to say that you’re angry at God?”

The question allowed me to open a door that I had been knocking on for a long time. Behind that door, with the anger, was honesty and freedom to see God in my life, just as it was. My director prayerfully held my story up to the light, turned it this way and that, and invited me to see God’s light reflecting from the various angles.

As a pastor and spiritual director, I am honored to stand with people at a door of new insight, to witness as they enter and to listen as they describe their experience of God. Or we watch for a while and notice the view, grateful for God’s presence where we see it and searching for new light where the path is unclear.

My job as a spiritual director is to listen and to pray. I hold the stories I am entrusted with and witness to the light as it reflects from different angles. This is all about people having the opportunity to see their own story in a new light and to encounter God there.

Deron Brill Bergstresser (MDiv 2004) has been a pastor at Faith Mennonite Church in Goshen, Ind., since 2003.

Charlene Epp

One gift for which I am thankful is to have been raised in a family and community immersed in a living faith

in Christ. Spiritual disciplines such as morning devotions and evening prayers were daily rhythms. Being a follower of Jesus and incorporating daily spiritual disciplines into my life was and remains a conscious choice.

Even so, as a young adult I found myself in a quandary of how God was at work in my life. At the time, I turned to a spiritual director. That experience has led me to utilize spiritual direction throughout nearly three decades. Those women and men who have walked with me have exercised a unique quality of deep listening, which created a sacred space for the voice of God to be heard through my soul. They had the ability to provide holy listening, regardless of their own faith affiliation or religious practices or theological premises. They were present to me in a manner that allowed an awareness of God’s guidance for and presence with me to surface. It deepened and strengthened my own faith walk.

Having the valuable experience of such a spiritual companion led me to be open to training for and serving as a spiritual director for others. Whether with a group

or individuals, the spiritual discipline of deep listening to another has culled from within the theological practice of allowing God to be God and the Mystery of the Holy Spirit at work to remain what it is: a mystery. Deep listening requires setting aside one’s own agenda and becoming a vessel of the Holy Spirit’s message and presence to another. Inevitably when this happens, both “director” and “directed” are changed by the encounter.

In each meeting there is a bringing together, by God, of individuals whose converging spiritual journeys offer spiritual healing for specific individuals, and, therefore, our world. Such transformative experiences are a testimony of the Living Christ moving in our midst—and sometimes with the most unlikely people. Yet, if these people have experienced healing of spiritual nature, no matter what their daily spiritual disciplines include, or how they may spend their Sunday mornings, they can move into the world as agents of the Living Christ to those they encounter.

Charlene Epp (MDiv 1999) lives in Beaverton, Ore. ●

Rooted and Grounded conference



Sarah Thompson (MDiv 2011) and Devon Miller (MAPS 2009) were among the 53 workshop and paper presenters at Rooted and Grounded: A Conference on Land and Christian Discipleship. Sarah shared ways in which Christian Peacemaker Teams, of which she is executive director, is engaging in environmental issues. Devon, a PhD candidate at Michigan State University, addressed the social, economic and political processes that shaped how Anabaptists viewed their settlement of northern Indiana and the subsequent displacement of the Potawatomi.

Recordings of the three keynote addresses, including the one by S. Roy Kaufman (MDiv 1969), are available. To read a news story and find links to photos and recordings, visit www.ambs.edu/news/The-Bible-was-central-in-Rooted-and-Grounded-conference-on-land-and-discipleship.cfm

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www.ambs.edu/news-events/calendar/10147

Listen to audio recordings of recent events: www.ambs.edu/news-events/iTunesU.cfm

ALUMNI NEWS NOTES

Garry Jost (MDiv 2000), Religious Studies faculty at Marylhurst University, Portland, Ore., gave two presentations in Europe in July 2014. He presented at the Society of Biblical Literature International Meeting in Vienna, Austria, and at Manuscripts and Text, Languages and Contexts: The Transmission of Knowledge in the Horn of Africa, in Hamburg, Germany.

Timothy Singenstreu (MDiv 2003) was ordained June 15 at Salem Mennonite Church, Wooster, Ohio.

Dorothy Jean Weaver (MDiv 1977) has joined the editorial board for *The Journal of Inductive Biblical Studies* (JIBS), edited by David R. Bauer and Frederick J. Long of Asbury Theological Seminary.

SeongHan Kim (MAPS 2005), media director of

Korea InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, has been named a Hanson Fellow. He is a PhD student at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Chicago, studying intersections of missiology and peace studies.

Phil Bergey (MATS 1993) received an MA in Human Development and a PhD in Human and Organizational Systems from Fielding Graduate University in Santa Barbara, Calif. He is an executive coach and process consultant with Design Group International. Phil is currently also part-time interim lead pastor at Blooming Glen (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Ulli Klemm (MDiv 1985) is in his tenth year as head correctional chaplain for the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections. He was awarded the Thomas Fulcomer Award for professional excellence.

Elaine Kauffman (MDiv 1997) spent a sabbatical learning Spanish in Ecuador and revisiting Brazil where she had lived while on Mennonite mission board assignments.

Jeni Hiett Umble (MDiv 1998) serves part-time as pastor of Living Light of Peace (formerly Arvada Mennonite) in Arvada, Colo.

Virginia Gerbrandt (MDiv 2011) married Andrew Richert, July 19 at Bergthaler Mennonite Church of Altona where she is assistant pastor.

Mark Weidner (MDiv 1973) is ending an interim pastoral assignment at Cincinnati (Ohio) Mennonite Fellowship and in January will join the interim pastoral team at First Mennonite Church, Bluffton.

Sharon Norton (MDiv 2013) was licensed for ministry at

Goshen City Church of the Brethren on June 8, 2013.

Tina Schlabach (MDiv 2003) is involved in Southwest Mennonite Conference and is working as a spiritual director and as a spirituality consultant to patients at El Rio Community Health Center in Tucson, Ariz.

Jennifer Gingerich (MDiv 2012) completed a year-long residency in Clinical Pastoral Education and is pursuing chaplaincy employment.

DEATHS

Emma Sommers Richards (BTh 1950) died Sept. 6, 2014, in Goshen. She was a teacher, mission worker in Japan and pastor. *According to the grace given to her*, published by IMS, explores her call to ministry and her groundbreaking ordination in 1973. ●

Call for nominations

Do you know a graduate whose ministry we can learn from? Someone in creative ministry or with a history of remarkable service?

We are asking for nominations for the 2015 Alumni Ministry and Service Recognition. Please consider nominations of both younger and older graduates, as well as graduates from different ethnic groups and diverse settings.

Graduates of Goshen Biblical Seminary, Mennonite

Biblical Seminary, Associated and Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary are eligible if they have had at least ten years of ministry experience.

To nominate graduates, visit www.amsb.edu/alumni/Ministry-and-Service-Award. Select the link to the form, fill it out online, save it and send it to Janeen Bertsche Johnson at AMBS: jbjohnson@amsb.edu.

Send nominations no later than Jan. 1. ●

Resources for conversations on sexuality

AMBS faculty are providing a resources for conversations in the church about sexuality and relationships. These materials explore issues from many different perspectives, including biblical study, church polity and a call for prayer. Visit www.amsb.edu/publishing/sexuality-conversation.cfm

Also visit Sara Wenger Shenk's post, "Patient Vigor," on her Practicing Reconciliation blog: www.amsb.edu/publishing/2014/09/Patient-Vigor-for-interesting-times.cfm ●

In Memoriam

Weyburn Groff (BD 1954), 92, died October 2 in Goshen, Ind. From 1965 to 1986, he was registrar and taught Christian education at AMBS.

Weyburn and Thelma, his wife, spent 20 years as missionaries in India. He was one of the founders of Union Biblical Seminary in Yeotmal, where he served as faculty.

He earned a PhD in education from New York University in 1963. His dissertation, *Satyagraha and Nonresistance: A Comparative Study of Ghandian and Mennonite Nonviolence*, was published in 2009 by the Institute of Mennonite Studies.

Weyburn also served as a pastor and after his retirement from AMBS, he and Thelma were sent by Mennonite Central Committee as pastoral counselors in southeast Asia.

An obituary of Weyburn Groff is published on the Mennonite Mission Network website: www.mennonitemission.net/Stories/News/Pages/MissionworkersawgospelofJesusinIndiashero.aspx ●

Photo: Weyburn Groff was honored at the Nov. 6, 2009, celebration of the publication of his dissertation. Hatoko Inoue, posing with him, was the student spouse volunteer who helped prepare the manuscript for printing.





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A seminary of
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A M B S N O T E S

Vision looks at joy

The fall issue of *Vision: A Journal for Church and Theology* focuses on joy, with **Mary Schertz**, professor of New Testament and director of IMS, as the editor. Alumni writers include **Chris Marshall, Julia Gingrich, Janet Elaine Guthrie, Jennifer Davis Sensenig, Korey Dyck, Sarah Thompson, and Anita Yoder Kehr**. For an editorial, a selected article and information about subscribing, visit mennovision.org

Anabaptist Witness launches

The journal, *Anabaptist Witness* (formerly *Mission Focus*), published the first issue in October. Anabaptist and Mennonite understandings of mission and the interchange among mission practice, missiology and Anabaptist identity are the focus.

Editors are **Jamie Ross (MDiv 2012)** and Jamie Pitts, assistant professor of theology and ethics.

All content is available at no charge online. The site also provides information about purchasing print copies. Visit anabaptistwitness.org for details.

IMS Catalog

The Institute of Mennonite Studies has its first-ever catalog. All 81 books published since 1958 are annotated and indexed. Find the catalog online from a link at www.ams.edu/publishing/Institute-of-Mennonite-Studies.cfm

Pastors Week 2015

"Where culture blurs theology: What is an Anabaptist Christian" is the theme that four presenters will address:

- Greg Boyd, PhD
- Drew Hart, MDiv, PhD student
- **Janet Plenert, MATS 2008**
- **Elizabeth Soto Albrecht, (student 1984–85), DMin**

Visit www.ams.edu/pastorsweek for details of the January 26–29 event.

Rural Ministry seminar and class

Explore the unique mission and challenges of congregations in rural contexts at the AMBS–Kansas Center morning seminar (Jan. 24) and a one-credit-hour course (Jan. 20–24). These are led by **Roy Kaufman (MDiv 1969)**, retired pastor. For information and to register, visit www.ams.edu/ruralministry ●